

Australasian Students' Surgical Conference 2017 (Adelaide)

In May I attended the 2017 Australasian Students' Surgical Conference, which was held in Adelaide. This was a three-day conference held over the weekend and involved keynote speakers, research presentations, clinical skills workshops and social events.

The importance of research was a huge emphasis of the conference and a take home message for many students – get your foot in the door as soon as possible! Having some kind of research experience during your training is going to put you in a more advantageous position in the future, when applying for internships and training programs.

The speakers were inspiring. I was particularly in awe of Professor Mark Shrimme, who has dedicated his life to advocating for, and delivering, head and neck surgical services in low-income countries. In his presentation, he used two real life case studies from his work in Madagascar that demonstrated the inequity and inaccessibility of surgery in the third world.

The social events were crazy fun. I travelled to Adelaide solo, but met so many amazing people and made some great friends. The gala ball held at the Convention Centre was definitely the social highlight of the weekend.

As a final year student, in retrospect I would have found conferences like this really beneficial to attend in the earlier years of medical school. There was invaluable advice given by respected surgeons from all over the world on how to make the most of your time at medical school and how to give yourself the best possible opportunities to achieve the things you wish to in the future.

Overall, I would highly recommend attending the ASSC, and my advice is to start attending these conferences as early in your medical studies as possible. Not only will you learn, but you will also be inspired. It's attending such events, and networking with like-minded people, that you will begin to develop an interest and a passion in certain speciality areas, that may ultimately influence the course of your career.